



## Language - The Keyword To Communication

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### ABSTRACT

*Language forms the backbone of any form of verbal communication. The communication may occur between two individuals, a group of individuals or mass communication by an individual directed at a larger audience. The following study aims at highlighting the importance of language used in the proper form and at the same time, evolution of communication across the millenniums. The importance of word play by juxtaposing words and grammar.*

### Keywords:

#### Introduction

Communication as the term suggests means imparting or exchanging information or news. The word "Communication" is derived from the latin word "Communis" which means to share.

Since time immemorial, living beings, animals or humans have communicated to each other through various medium. The earliest recorded form of communication dating back to prehistory. Communication can be through the form of gestures, sign languages, touch, graphic representation between two singular entities or, amongst clusters of different entities.

Human communication evolved with speech more than 200,000 years ago when pre-historic beings may have used primal sounds and guttural growls as a medium. Symbols were developed and used to communicate around 30,000 years ago where as writing as a medium evolved a few centuries ago.

#### Speech

Speech is the vocalized form of human communication. In pre-historic times, before the advent of structured speech patterns, imperfection of speech pushed our ancestors who, after a span of several thousand years felt the need for easier dissemination of ideas and inventions. This eventually led to the creation of new forms of communication, improving the range of communication and the longevity of the information. This mode of communication was based on the concept of Symbols. Symbols essentially mean a conventional representation of a Concept.

The oldest known symbols created with the purpose of communication are evident in the form of cave art which were unearthed in our times. Carbon dating tests compounded the age of the paintings to the Upper Paleolithic era. This area is also referred to as the Late Stone Age dating approximately to a period of 50,000 to 1,00,000 years ago. This era coincided with the appearance of modern humanity and before the advent of agriculture. The oldest recorded cave painting dates to around 30,000 years B.C.

Communication per se requires a "Sender", a "Message" and a "Receipient". It can be seen as a process of information transmission governed by three levels of Semiotic Rules. Semiotics or Semiotic Studies is known as the study of signs and processes. It is closely related to the field of Linguistics which is the study of languages. The three levels of Semiotics are:

➤ Semantics – The relation between signs and the things to which they refer.

➤ Syntactics - The relation between signs and their formal structures.

➤ Pragmatics – The relation between the signs and the effect that they have on the people who use them.

Speech which is defined as the vocalized form of human communication is based on the syntactic combination of lexical and names that are drawn from very large vocabularies. Lexical is defined as an adjective pertaining to the words or vocabularies of a language. Vocabulary in turn is defined as a set of words in a language which are familiar to the person using the particular language.

Spoken words are created out of a phonetic combination of limited set of vowels and consonant speech sound units. In the vocabularies, these words are structured by different syntax forms and their speech of sound units thus creating thousands of individual combination or cluster of speech which are mutually unintelligible to each other and commonly named as Languages. Most human speakers also known as polyglots are able to communicate in two different clusters of speech known as Languages. Some immensely talented individuals can communicate in different clusters of speech and are thus christened as Multi-Lingual.

The vocal abilities also provide humans the capacity to sing in that particular language. Singing can be defined as the ability to produce musical sound with the voice. In many cultures speech has become the basis of its associated written language. Yet in many cultures, the written language differs from its spoken form in terms of syntax, vocabulary and phonetics. This particular effect is termed as Diglossia.

This leads us to the one major medium of communication which is Language. Language is defined as an abstract system of symbols and meanings. The system includes the rules (commonly known as grammar) that relate symbols and meanings to institutionalize the way communication is conducted between individuals in that particular system.

#### Language

Language is that singular feature which lays down the demarcation between humans from other animals.

The first question that arises is that across so many thousand years, even before language was put down in the literary form of writing, people communicated in different language which is difficult to comprehend. Tribes in Africa still communicate in their respective languages which do not have any literary representation. The answer might lie in the theory of Reappearance. If an individual was asked to recall any particular event, the individual could recollect till the last minute detail if he or she sincerely made that effort as the human brain is veritable storehouse of data. The memory simply "reappears". This is one theory how language can be stored. This theory does have its limitations.

Language by itself is the utilization of a limited databank of words into different permutations and combinations thus creating sentences. The number of sentences that can be made out of a limited set of words is infinite. This necessarily means that an individual who is not overly educated or literate for that matter, with only a limited vocabulary at his or her disposal can effectively communicate in that language for a lifetime.

Language has its own "Meaningfulness" and "Arbitrariness" which constructs the relation between the symbol and the thing or concept. This can be conceptualized by means of an example which takes into account the above mentioned methodology.

- E.g. The Lion is a large hairy animal which is wild with a huge mane, deadly claws and roars.

Language by itself is flexible.

Language is being governed by a Word Order arrangement which defines the delivery and meaning of each statement. The example is as given below.

Word Order	One translation of the meaning
Child, Kiss, Mother	The child is being asked to kiss the mother
Mother, Kiss, Child	The mother is being asked to kiss the child
Kiss, Mother, Child!	The child is being commanded to kiss the mother
Mother, Kiss, Child	The mother is being commanded to kiss the child

There is a Sound- Meaning link in a language is the most crucial facet of that particular communication. We are able to communicate with each other as we have mentally reached an agreement while speaking to each other as to what needs to be the message that needs to be communicated. The meaning of each concept is permanently linked to a particular word, positioned and pronounced in a particular fashion in that communication. Without this agreement there would be no language and no communication.

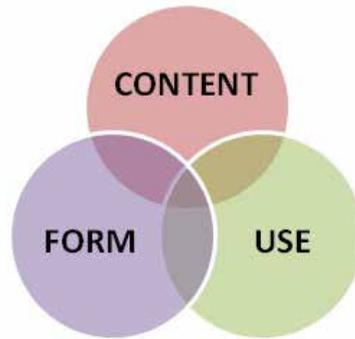
Kerch (1962) explained the major functions of knowledge through these three aspects.

1. Language is the primary vehicle of communication.
2. Language represents both the personality of the individual and the culture of his/her history.

Language in turn helps shape both personality and culture.

3. Language makes possible the growth and transmission of culture, the continuity of societies, and the effective functioning and control of the social group.

Bloom and Lahey (1978) divide language into three separate but overlapping components: Content, Form and Use They famously represented language as an integration of these three components in a Venn diagram:



**The Integration of Content, Form and Use**

Language in the development of the basic form of communication between human beings in a society. In society there are different cultures, religions and faiths. Therefore this transcends into different languages and dialects.

**Value Generation of Language**

Let us limit our concern to English. It is this language that is used in the world of finance, commerce, education, research, and the dissemination of knowledge (though other languages play different roles in some of these areas as well). It is essential if one is to study medicine, for example; or if one is to become a pilot of a sophisticated fighter aircraft. And it is the language of management, indeed of government, in most parts of the country.

But the purpose is not to argue for or against the English language. It is there and we need to recognize that it will be there for many years to come, and play a vital role in the evolution of India as a major economic and political force in the world. And in other areas as well - creative writing, for example, in which Indian writers have won accolades across countries and time.

Given this situation, it is necessary to look at what is happening to the language, because it is, like all languages, the primary and most sophisticated means of communication between people. If complex ideas are to be communicated with clarity and understood without any ambiguity, then it follows that the users of this language must be skilled in its use. They may not be Shakespeares or Miltons, but they must be familiar with what words mean, and what they do not.

"You should say what you mean," the March Hare told Alice in Alice in Wonderland. "I do," Alice replied, "at least I mean what I say - that's the same thing, you know." "Not the same thing a bit!" said the Hatter, "You might as well say that 'I see what I eat' is the same thing as 'I eat what I see.'" That is precisely the point. The way in which the language is being used more and more is making it pretty much what the Hatter said to Alice.

We are all aware that the young use colloquialisms, and slang, and that its use is considered to be very trendy - "cool", as they like to say, very "groovy". That is fine; it is what happens to language through the ages - it evolves and new words, expressions and usages surface. But these usually come about to make meanings clearer, not to confuse and blur them. I was told that at marketing meetings, where professionals hold forth on the success of their strategies, it is more "the market's rocking, man" than specific information on what the nature of their triumph is. Again, the phrase, as phrases go, is innocuous enough, a little curious, but understandable. But it teeters on the brink of obscurity; its use does not indicate anything other than the fact that they are doing well.

And what is happening is, to a very large extent, because of the fact that people who are now coming into fairly important marketing and management positions are using language in

this manner - a manner that reveals their inability to express themselves in it clearly, in precise terms. It reflects in the kind of advertisements one sees, where a debased form, supposedly loved by the young, is used. Its basis is bad English. Now, when this sort of thing is dinned into the heads of young people through television and the kind of programmes that appear to fascinate them, some of the corruption creeps into the everyday speech and indeed, the writing of the young.

The primary cause for the near-breakdown in communication is the appalling nature of English language teaching. In most States, even in private schools, there are teachers whose knowledge of English is atrocious. Some cannot spell correctly; others have only a vague idea of what grammar means; and most have a pitifully small vocabulary. This is what they communicate to their students. Small wonder, then, that these students come out of schools, and then carry into college the wreckage of a form of communication that is covered up for

a time by being passed off as college slang - "fundas" and "fatchas" are prime examples - but then they have to face the big bad world of work. And that is where the poor grasp of English brings with it standards which can only go down, never up.

### Conclusion

Language is that important facet of human life behavior which cannot be ignored. The example of English was taken as that is the language we all communicate through. The importance of syntax, grammar and voice modulation weighs the same in all languages and dialects. If one needs to be successful in a career language needs to be perfect. The wrong communication verbal or written can wreck careers or create rifts in personal as well as professional lives.

Language is that important tool when used well can shape destinies and fulfill aspirations.

### REFERENCES

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